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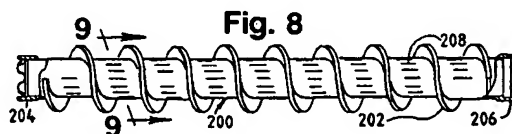
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D-85354 Freising (DE)(54) **Tube section having slots for sampling.**

(57) A pair of elongated cylindrical members are constructed with first and second collars extending axially beyond their adjoining ends. The first and second collars have adjoining indentations and projections at their end edges which are adapted to interlock with one another so as to prevent rotation of the two elongated members with respect to one another. A coupler is removably fitted over the exterior of the first and second collars and holds them together against axial movement with respect to one another. The collars are each welded to the axial ends of the first and second cylindrical members. A sampling tube section is provided having slots to allow the fluid to be sampled to enter the internal bore of the tube. The slots are axial, and are spaced apart both angularly and axially. The slots are tapered so as to have a narrower width at the outer surface of the tube than at the inner surface of the bore.

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This application is related to copending Application 93113765.7 (attorneys file No.56G03501) filed on the same day as the present application, the disclosure of which is incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to tube auger sections for sampling fluid at a given depth and an apparatus and method for coupling tube auger sections together in end-to-end relationship. The invention may be used more generally for coupling together elongated hollow tubes, elongated solid shafts, or elongated members either with or without flighting or other structure on the outer surface thereof.

One application for tube augers is drilling monitor wells. The purpose of a monitor well is to sample ground water or other fluids at a particular level to determine whether contaminants are present at that level. It is important that the interior bore of the tube auger sections be sealed except at the desired depth. If ground water or a contaminant at a higher level is permitted to seep into the tube, it will destroy the reliability of the monitoring at the desired level. The invention provides a reliable seal between sections of the tube auger.

Screens or access openings must be provided in the tube auger at the desired monitoring depth in the well. In the prior art, this was done by cutting a window in the tube and providing a screen therein to permit fluid to enter but to screen out sand and other particles. However, the cutting of an opening in the tube auger reduces the strength of the tube and sometimes results in the tube twisting or collapsing during the drilling process. Another known method was to cut horizontal, elongated slots in the tube section extending in a circumferential direction around the tube. However, such slots also weaken the tube and tend to become plugged with sand, soil or other debris, thus inhibiting the flow of the sample specimen into the inner bore of the tube.

There are many instances where the coupling of elongated members together in end-to-end relationship is desirable. For example, in the drilling of wells, it is desirable to connect a plurality of auger sections in end to end relationship as the well is being drilled. At times it may be desirable to couple elongated solid shafts or hollow tubes together in end-to-end relationship.

In all of these applications, it is desirable that the various sections of elongated members be rigidly coupled together and maintained in longitudinal alignment with one another. It is also desirable to couple these sections together so that they can be rotated in unison when torque is applied to them.

United States Patent 4,821,818 discloses a coupling system for separate tube auger sections.

The adjoining ends of the auger sections each include a collar which surrounds the end of the tube. The collar on one of the tubes is positioned rearwardly from the end of the tube so that the end of the tube protrudes beyond the collar. The collar on the other tube protrudes axially beyond the end of the tube. The axial ends of the two collars include projections and indentations which are adapted to mate together so as to hold the tubes against rotation with respect to one another. A hinged coupler is foldable to surround the two collars and hold them together so that the tube sections are held against axial movement away from one another.

Both of the collars in Patent 4,821,818 are attached to the tube sections by slipping them over the ends of the tube sections and welding them in place. This weld joint is difficult and time consuming to do.

Therefore, a primary object of the present invention is the provision of an improved apparatus and method for sampling ground water or other fluid at a desired depth.

A further object of the invention is to provide a stronger and more reliable sampling auger section.

A further object of the invention is to provide a sampling auger section which is resistant to plugging.

A further object of the invention is to provide a tube auger with reliable leak proof seals between sections to prevent unwanted fluid or debris from entering the tube bore.

A further object of the invention is the provision of improved apparatus and method for coupling elongated members together in end to end relationship.

A further object of the present invention is the provision of apparatus and method which can be assembled in less time and with greater ease than the assembly shown in U.S. Patent 4,821,818.

A further object of the present invention is the provision of an apparatus and method which can be used to couple various types of elongated members together, including solid shafts, hollow tubes, and elongated members with or without flightings or other structure on the exterior surface thereof.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The foregoing objects are achieved by apparatus which includes a sampling tube auger section having slots to allow the fluid to be sampled to enter the internal bore of the tube section. The slots are axial, so that they are vertical when the auger is used in the typical manner to drill a vertical hole in the ground. The slots are offset both angularly and axially from one another and

arranged along a spiral, which in the preferred embodiment is parallel to the flighting. The slots are tapered from a narrower width at the outer surface of the tube to a wider width at the inner surface of the bore. The method for drilling a sampling well includes placing one or more sampling auger sections in the string of sections at the depth or depths at which the samples are desired to be taken.

The first and second collars attached to the adjoining axial ends of first and second elongated cylindrical members. The elongated cylindrical members may be hollow tubes, solid shafts, or elongated members with or without flighting or other structure on the exterior thereof. The first and second collars each include annular collar shoulders facing axially away from one another. The first and second collars also include adjoining end edges, each of which include axially extending protrusions and indentations. The protrusions and indentations are adapted to mate with one another when the first and second collars are joined together so as to cause the two collars to rotate in unison with one another. Both of the collars are welded to, and extends axially beyond, the axial end of the shaft or tube to which they are connected. The weld joints connecting the collars to the ends of the tubes are easier and quicker to make than the weld joints shown between the collars and the tubes of U.S. Patent 4,821,818.

An elongated cylindrical connecting tube is press fitted or otherwise suitably retained within an internal bore of one of the two collars. This connecting tube projects beyond the axial end of the collar to which it is retained, and the projecting portion of the connecting tube is matingly fitted within an internal bore of the other collar.

A hinged coupler is foldable around the two interlocked collars. The coupler includes a pair of spaced apart annular flanges which engage the coupler shoulders of the first and second couplers so as to hold the first and second couplers together in their interlocked relationship and prevent them from moving axially away from one another. The coupler is comprised of two separate semi-cylindrical halves which are hinged together so that they can be folded around the exterior interlocked collars.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is an elevational view of a pair of auger sections joined together by the present invention.

Figure 2 is a pictorial exploded view of the two ends of the tubes to be joined and the hinged coupler for locking them together.

Figure 3 is a sectional view taken along line 3-3 of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a sectional view of an elongated cylinder before it is cut in half to form the two collars used with the present invention.

Figure 5 is an elevational view of the elongated cylinder in Figure 4 showing the cut line for separating the two collars from one another.

Figure 6 is a sectional view taken along line 6-6 of Figure 5.

Figure 7 is a perspective view of the hinged coupler used with the present invention;

Figure 8 is an elevation view of a sampling auger section, that is, an auger section having the axial sampling slots of the present invention; Figure 9 is a sectional view taken along line 9-9 of Figure 8 showing the angular spacing of the slots; and

Figure 10 is a detailed sectional view showing a tapered slot.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to the drawings, the numeral 10 generally designates a tube assembly formed from a first elongated tube 12 and a second elongated tube 14. Tubes 12, 14 are joined together by a coupler 16. Tubes 12, 14 include tube bores 18, 20 respectively, and include flightings 22, 24 on their respective outer surfaces. While tubes 12, 14 are shown to be hollow, they can also be solid shafts, and they can be provided either with or without the flightings 22, 24 on their exterior surfaces. Tube 12 includes a chamfered tube end 26 and tube 14 includes a chamfered tube end 28. Attached to the axial end of tube 12 is a male collar 30, and attached to the axial end of the tube 14 is a female collar 32. Collars 30, 32 each include a first bore 34 and a second larger bore 36. The diameter of the second larger bore 36 in female collar 32 is preferably slightly larger than the diameter of second bore 36 in male collar 30. The inner end of bore 36 in collar 32 is provided with an O-ring groove 38 having an elastomeric O-ring 40 seated therein. Collar 30 does not have an O-ring groove.

The end of collar 30 which is attached to the tube 18 includes a chamfered shoulder 42 which terminates in an annular lip flange 44. Lip flange 44 is adapted to fit within the tube bore 18 of tube 12 as shown in Figure 3. The collar 30 and the tube 12 are then joined together by an annular weld 46. Weld 46 is much easier and less time consuming to make than the weld seam shown in U.S. Patent 4,821,818. It has been found that the collars 30, 32 of the present invention can be constructed and attached to tubes 12, 14 in approximately four less hours than is required to constructing and attaching

the collars in the construction shown in Patent 4,821,818.

Collar 32 includes a chamfered shoulder 48 and in annular lip flange 50 which fits within the tube bore 20 of tube 14. An annular weld 52 attaches collar 32 to tube 14 in a manner similar to the way weld 46 attaches collar 30 to tube 18.

Collars 30, 32 each include facing end edges 54, 56 respectively. End edge 54 includes a plurality of projections 58 which alternate with indentations 60. End edge 56 includes a plurality of projections 62 and indentations 64 which are adapted to matingly fit within the projections 58, 60 of collar 30.

The exterior surfaces of collars 30, 32 are each provided with axially facing collar shoulders 66, 68 which face in opposite directions from one another. On opposite sides of shoulder 66, collar 30 is provided with an enlarged diameter portion 70 and a reduced diameter portion 72. Collar 32 is provided with an enlarged diameter portion 74 and a reduced diameter portion 76 which are positioned on opposite sides of shoulder 68.

A connecting tube 78 is press fitted or otherwise suitably retained within the collar bore 36 of first collar 30 and includes opposite chamfered ends 80, 82. An annular groove 84 having an elastomeric O-ring 85 seated therein is positioned adjacent chamfered end 80. When tube 78 is press fitted or otherwise suitably retained within collar bore 36 of collar 30, it protrudes axially beyond the end of collar 30 and is sized to matingly fit within the second collar bore 36 of collar 32 as is shown in Figure 3. Because the diameter of bore 36 in female collar 32 is slightly larger than the diameter of bore 36 in male collar 30, connecting tube 78 can be press fitted or otherwise retained snugly within collar bore 36 of collar 30, but fits somewhat more loosely within collar bore 36 of collar 32. This allows sections to be easily assembled and disassembled because connecting tube 78 will remain fitted within the smaller collar bore during the assembly or disassembly process.

Coupler 16 surrounds the interlocked collars 30, 32 and includes a first coupler half 86 and a second coupler half 88. Coupler halves 86, 88 are pivotally joined by an axial hinge 90. Coupler 16 includes an internal end flange 92 at one end thereof, and an internal end flange 94 at the other end thereof. Flanges 92, 94 each provide spaced apart facing shoulders 96, 98 which define an enlarged bore 100 therebetween.

The coupler halves 86, 88 may be attached together in the manner shown in Figures 1 and 2 by means of an interlocking locking sleeve 102 and locking pin 104. Locking pin 104 is telescopically received within a pin cylinder 106 and includes a pin handle 108 which projects outwardly through a

pin groove 110 in pin cylinder 106. The pin 104 is spring mounted so as to be biased to its extended position shown in Figure 6. Handle 108 may be used to retract pin 104 so that it can be aligned with sleeve 102 and permitted to spring to its extended position within the sleeve 102, thereby locking the coupler halves into a complete cylinder.

When the coupler 16 is folded into surrounding engagement over the interlocking collars 30, 32, the shoulders 96, 98 of coupler 16 face and engage the shoulders 66, 68 of sleeves 30, 32. This holds the sleeves 30, 32 against axial movement away from one another. An important feature of the present invention is that when coupler 16 is fitted in surrounding engagement over collars 30, 32, any axial tension between tubes 12, 14 is borne by the adjoining shoulders 66, 96 and 68, 98. The pin 104 and the sleeve 102 do not carry any axial tension forces between tubes 12 and 14.

Any tendency of tubes 12, 14 to rotate with respect to one another is prevented by the interlocking indentations and projections 60, 58, 62, 64 of collars 30, 32. Thus the securement of tubes 12 and 14 together is rigid, and the tubes 12, 14 are able to rotate in unison with one another as though they were one.

Referring to Figures 4, 5, and 6, the collars 30, 32 of the present invention are constructed in a unique manner. Figure 4 illustrates a unitary cylindrical tube 112 which is used to construct collars 30, 32. Tube 112 is machined out to provide the first and second collar bores 34, 36 for collars 30, 32 respectively. The O-ring groove 38 is also machined out from the interior of unitary tube 112. Similarly the chamfered shoulders 42, 48 and the lip flanges 44, 50, as well as the shoulders 66, 68 are machined on the exterior surface of the tube 112.

Referring to Figure 5, the tube 112 is then cut into two separate collars 30, 32 along a cut line designated by the numeral 114 in Figure 5. Cut line 114 is preferably formed by a laser cutting tool so as to provide a clean cut. Cutting line 114 follows the pattern which establishes the indentations 60, 64, and the projections 58, 62. Also, as can be seen in Figure 6, the cut line 114 is made in radial direction so that the edges of projections 58, 62 and indentations 60, 64 extend along a radius of cylinder 112. By forming the collars 30, 32 in this manner, it is possible to ensure that the projections 58, 62 matingly fit within the indentations 60, 64 so as to provide a tight secure mating fit.

After the collars 30, 32 have been formed, they are welded to the ends of tubes 12, 14 by annular welds 46, 52, and the construction of the tube sections is complete. It has been found that the construction of tube sections in this manner saves approximately four hours over the construction time

required for the tube sections shown in Patent 4,821,818.

Figure 8 shows a tube auger section 200 including flighting 202 on its outer surface. Attached to one axial end of the tube 200 is a male collar 204, and attached to the other end is a female collar 206. Other combinations of coupling collars, or plain ends, may be attached to the ends of the tube depending on the application and assembly of the series of tube sections.

Slots 208 are provided in tube section 200. The slots are parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tube 200, that is, they are vertical in the typical application where auger section 200 is being used to drill a vertical hole in the ground. In the embodiment shown, each slot 208 is approximately two inches long.

Figure 9 is a cross-sectional view of tube 200 along line 9-9 of Figure 8. The slots 208 are spaced apart by an angle α about the circumference of tube section 200; in the example shown, α is 24 degrees. Thus, in the embodiment shown with eight turns of the flighting 202, there are 15 slots per turn for a total of 120 slots on tube section 200. As shown in Figure 8, in the preferred embodiment the slots 208 are spaced at angular intervals about the circumference of the tube 200 and are offset axially from one another along a spiral path parallel to flighting 202. The effect of this spacing is to not reduce the structural integrity of the tube 200 as severely as the slots or other openings used in previously known augers. Further, the vertical (i.e., axial), tapered slots have been found to be more resistant to plugging than horizontal (i.e., perpendicular to the tube axis) slots and non-tapered slots used in prior art sampling augers when drilling in many types of soil.

In the preferred embodiment, the width of each slot 208 is tapered. As shown in Figure 10, each slot tapers from a narrower width A at the outer surface 212 of tube 200 to a wider width B at the inner surface 210 of the interior bore of tube 200. For example, a slot 208 may taper from approximately 0.008 inch at the outer surface 212 of tube section 200 to approximately 0.030 inch at the inner surface 210 of the interior bore. The slots 208 are preferably formed by laser cutting. The preferred width of the slot at the inner surfaces and outer surfaces 210 and 212, respectively, depends in part on the wall thickness of the tube 200. While a width of 0.008 inch at the outer surface 212 appears to be the preferred width, it is contemplated that widths at least as narrow as 0.003 inch and as wide as at least 0.015 inch also will work satisfactorily. The optimum width depends in part also on the type of soil or other material surrounding tube 200 in a particular application.

The purpose of the slots 208 is to permit fluid to enter into the interior bore of tube 200 so as to collect a sample of ground water or other fluid at the desired drill depth(s). Tube sections having slots are used only at the desired depth(s) for monitoring or sampling fluid from the well. The majority of sections used in drilling the well are identical to tube sections 12 and 14 as shown in Figure 1 and do not have slots. Tube sections with the slots of the invention but without flighting may also be used, for example, for taking samples in a previously-drilled well.

The preferred embodiment of the invention has been set forth in the drawings and specification, and although specific terms are employed, these are used in a generic or descriptive sense only and are not used for purposes of limitation. Changes in the form and proportion of parts as well as the substitution of equivalents are contemplated as circumstances may suggest or render expedient without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as further defined in the following claims.

Claims

1. A tube section comprising:
 - a tube having an internal bore; and
 - a plurality of slots extending from the outer surface of said tube to the inner surface of said bore for allowing fluid to enter said bore, each said slot extending in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said tube.
2. The tube section of claim 1 wherein said slots are spaced at angular intervals about the circumference of said tube.
3. The tube section of claim 1 wherein said slots are offset axially with respect to one another.
4. The tube section of claim 3 further comprising a helical auger flighting on the outer surface of said tube, said slots being located along a spiral path parallel to said flighting.
5. The tube section of claim 1 wherein said slots are tapered, each said slot having a narrower width at said outer surface of said tube than at said inner surface of said bore.
6. The tube section of claim 5 wherein each said slot is approximately 0.008 inch wide at said outer surface of said tube and approximately 0.030 inch wide at said inner surface of said bore.
7. The tube section of claim 1 wherein each said slot is approximately two inches long.

8. A tube section comprising:
a tube having an internal bore; and
a plurality of slots extending from an outer surface of said tube to an inner surface of said bore for allowing fluid to enter said bore, each said slot being tapered so as to have a narrower width at said outer surface of said tube than at said inner surface of said bore. 5
9. The tube section of claim 8 wherein each said slot is approximately 0.008 inch wide at said outer surface of said tube and approximately 0.030 inch wide at said inner surface of said bore. 10
10. The tube section of claim 8 wherein said slots are spaced at angular intervals about the circumference of said tube. 15
11. The tube section of claim 8 wherein said slots are offset axially with respect to one another. 20
12. The tube section of claim 11 further comprising a helical auger flighting on the outer surface of said tube, said slots being located along a spiral path parallel to said flighting. 25
13. The tube section of claim 8 wherein each said slot is approximately two inches long. 30
14. A method for drilling a sampling well comprising:
connecting a string of one or more tube auger sections, each said section having a helical flighting on its exterior surface; and 35
placing in said string at the depth at which a sample is desired to be taken at least one sampling tube section, said sampling tube section having a plurality of slots in said tube for allowing fluid to enter the internal bore of said sampling tube section, each of said slots being substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said tube. 40
15. A method for drilling a sampling well comprising:
connecting a string of one or more tube auger sections, each said section having a helical flighting on its exterior surface; and 45
placing in said string at the depth at which a sample is desired to be taken at least one sampling tube section, said sampling tube section having a plurality of slots in said tube for allowing fluid to enter the internal bore of said sampling tube section, each of said slots being tapered so as to have a narrower width at said outer surface of said tube than at said inner surface of said bore. 50 55

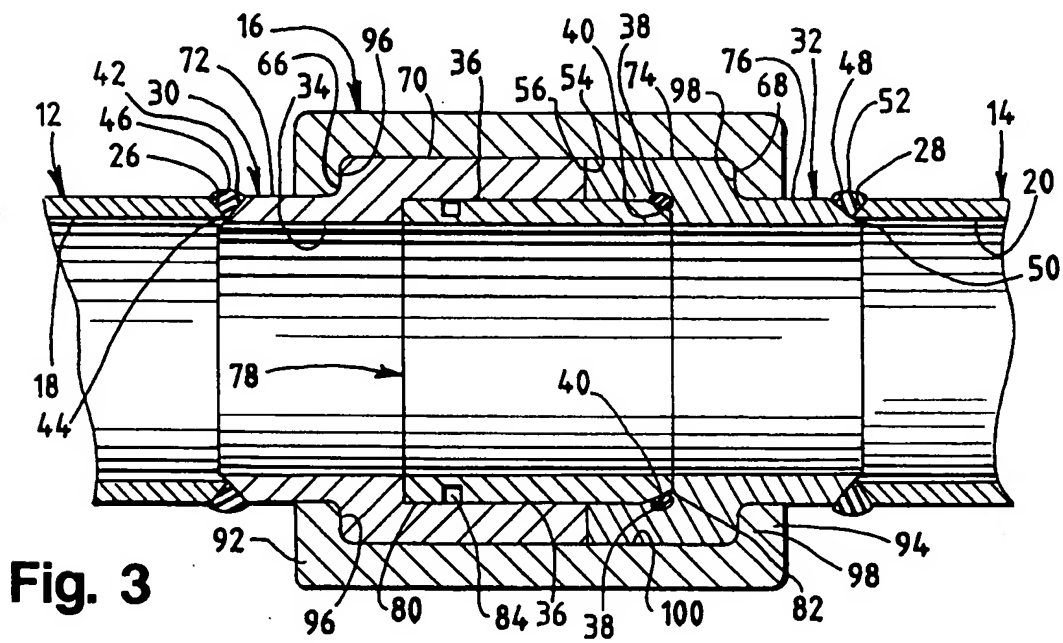
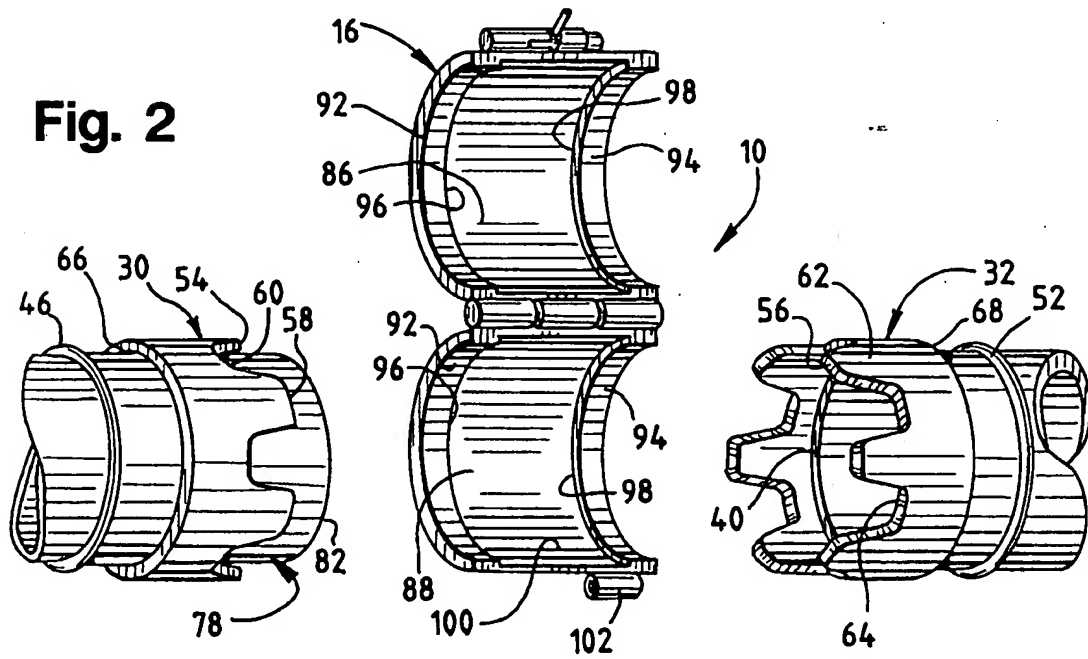
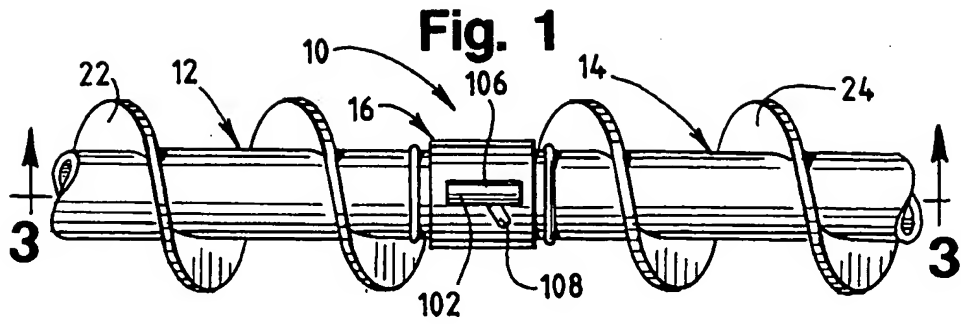


Fig. 4

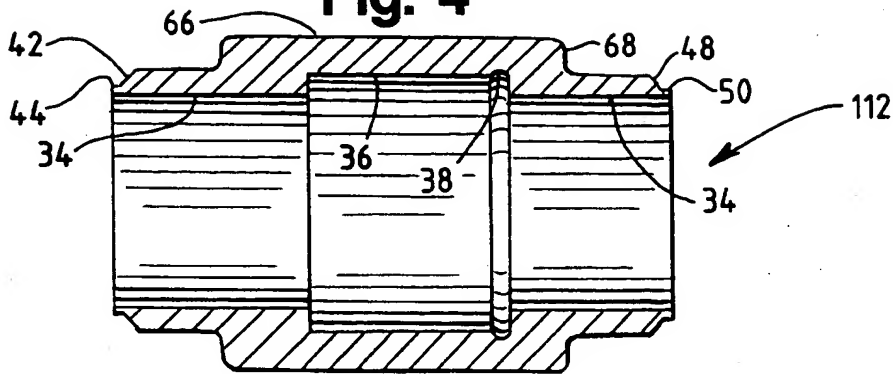


Fig. 5

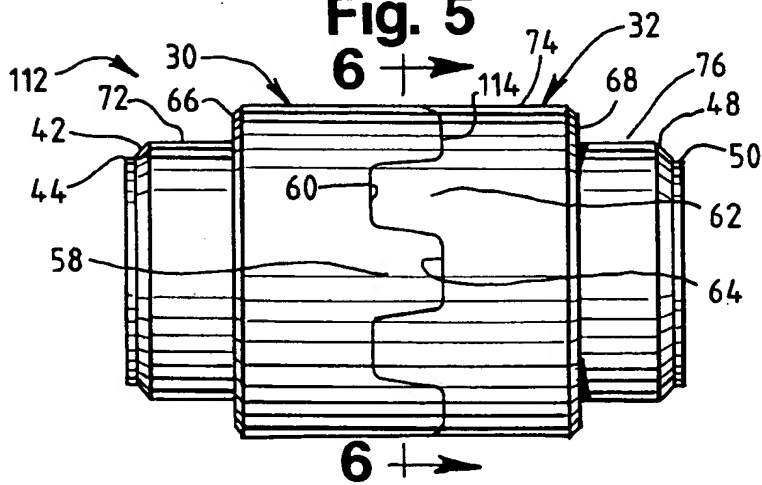


Fig. 6

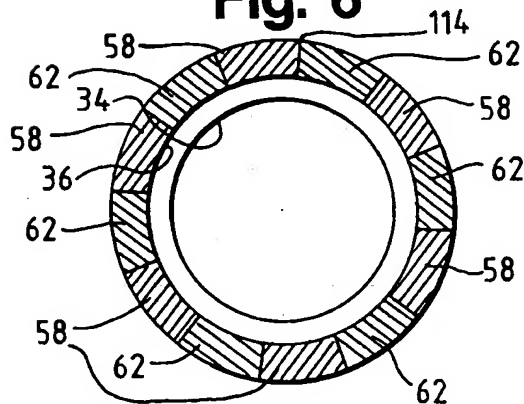


Fig. 7

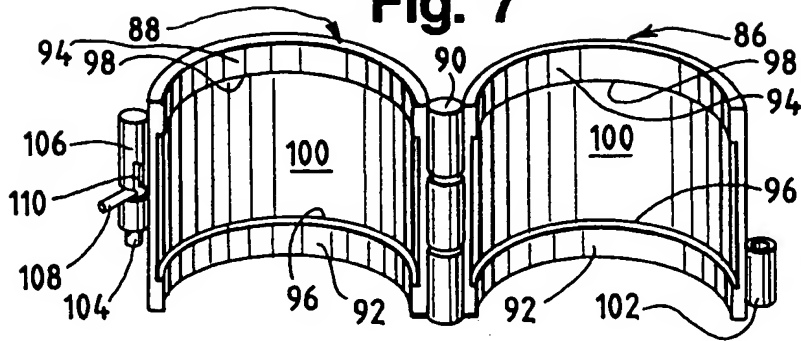


Fig. 8

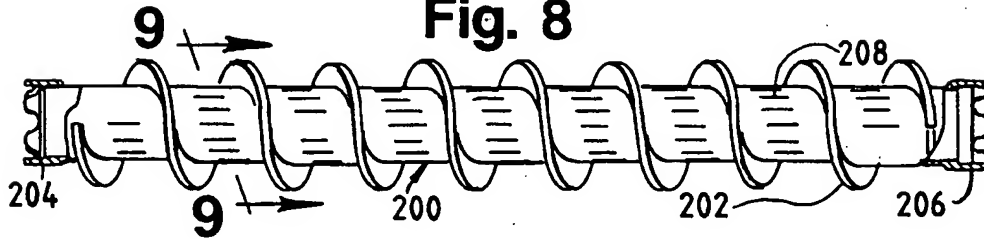


Fig. 9

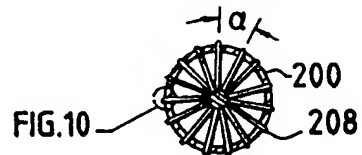
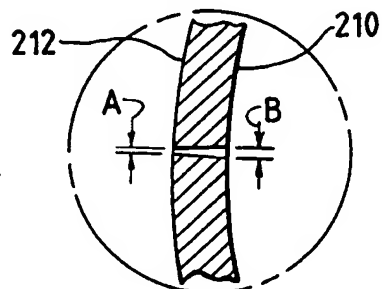


Fig. 10





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 93 11 3774

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.5)
X Y	US-A-3 357 564 (MEDFORD ET AL.) * column 3, line 6 - line 15; figures 1,2 * ---	1-4,7,14 5,6,12, 13	E21B43/08 E21B49/08
X Y	WORLD OIL vol. 180, no. 2 , 1 February 1975 pages 33 - 39 G.O. SUMAN, JR. 'Sand Control-Part 4' * page 37, right column; figures 35A,35B,36 * ---	8-11,15 5,6,12, 13	
X	US-A-2 401 035 (AKEYSON ET AL.) * page 1, left column, line 1 - line 7 * * page 2, right column, line 20 - line 25; figures 1,2 * ---	1-4,14	
X A	US-A-3 502 145 (DU MEE ET AL.) * column 3, line 9 - line 75; figures * ---	1-4 10-14	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.5) E21B
X	US-A-5 095 990 (BEST ET AL.) * column 2, line 57 - column 3, line 30; figures 1,2 * ---	8-11,15	
A,D	US-A-4 821 818 (MEFFERD) * column 4, line 59 - column 5, line 7; figure 2 * -----	1,4,6-9, 12-15	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 20 December 1993	Examiner Lingua, D
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			